Can an asynchronous student conference in Open Studio develop students' critical evaluation skills?

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What we are intending to do

- Evaluating Contemporary Science, S350, helps students learn, develop and apply key skills such as evaluation of current science research and communication of these findings to different audiences, assessed via an Open Studio based student conference.
- Not clear to what extent students develop (and recognize) deeper rather than superficial critical evaluation skills that focus on the science presented. Needed for them to succeed in their final project modules **(student success)**.
- Important to understand how students approach learning through peer-to-peer feedback in an online environment so that student experience and success can be enhanced **(learning design)** and best practice in the assessment of such activities can be shared within the module and to other modules **(innovative assessment)**.

Research questions

1. Can a student conference using OS lead to a positive impact on module success through supporting a deeper engagement with critical evaluation of contemporary science?
2. What 'quick fixes' can we put in place to help promote student engagement in deeper learning and reflection?

Methodology

- We will collect and analyse data on when students engage with the conference, the scope and depth of that engagement (particularly in relation to feedback from and to peers), and whether students reflect or act on that feedback.
- From this we will propose interventions and actions in 19J that will promote deeper learning and reflection.
- We will then monitor the effectiveness of these interventions.

Impacts

- Minimizing the stress associated with OS activities so that students are more aware of the professional skills they develop than the mechanics of the conference preparation
- Development of post-conference teaching materials
- Assess the potential for enhancement activities such as a synchronous conference
- Advice for the design of assessment using OS and/or student conferencing/peer evaluation

Outcomes

- Increased attainment levels amongst S350 students, particularly in professional skills (for example using and giving constructive feedback, time management and organization) – in line with **student success** and **employability** priorities
- Increased student confidence in giving peer-to-peer constructive feedback
- Recommendations on design of assessment involving OS for other STEM modules and disciplines.

Link with institutional and eSTEeM priorities

- The project supports the OU's institutional priorities of **student success** and **employability**
- The project lies within the eSTEeM theme of **supporting students, learning design** and potentially feeds into **innovative assessment**

eSTEeM
The OU centre for STEM pedagogy